



*With God First,
We Will Live, Learn
and Thrive*



St Thomas More School Alfredton

2022 Annual Report to the School Community



Registered School Number: 1803

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Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Simon Duffy, attest that St Thomas More School is compliant with:

- All of the requirements for the minimum standards and other requirements for the registration of schools as specified in *the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)* and the *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic)*, except where the school has been granted an exemption from any of these requirements by the VRQA
- Australian Government accountability requirements related to the 2022 school year under the *Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth)* and the *Australian Education Regulations 2013 (Cth)*
- The Child Safe Standards as prescribed in both Ministerial Orders in effect in 2022:
 - Ministerial Order No.870 - Child Safe Standards, Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools, in Semester 1, 2022;
 - Ministerial Order No.1359 - Implementing the Child Safe Standards, Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises, in Semester 2, 2022.

08/03/2023

NOTE: The School's financial performance information has been provided to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and will be available for the community to access from their website at www.acnc.gov.au

Governing Authority Report

The Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL) is now in its second year of governance of schools. In 2022 two additional schools - Damascus College and St Francis Xavier transferred their governance to DOBCEL, a total 58 schools in the Diocese are governed by DOBCEL.

Across our diocese, schools governed by DOBCEL provide distinctive Catholic education from the Murray to the Sea. This support is operationalised by Catholic Education Ballarat and is responsible for the implementation of DOBCEL strategies, policies and procedures, and overseeing the day to day running of our schools.

The role of DOBCEL is to lead, provide service to, and partner with schools to enable every student to flourish and every student, staff member and family to experience the presence of the risen Christ in our schools.

We recognise the extraordinary servant leadership of all our school staff, leaders and Principals during 2022 as they supported their school communities through a myriad of challenges that included staff shortages, covid disruption, implications of widespread flooding and Enterprise Bargaining negotiations. We recognise the commitment and focus all school staff give to the students and families in their care in the spirit of the Gospels. Their commitment has been unwavering.

We thank families for their commitment to partnership with our schools in Catholic Education again in 2022 to support all our students to flourish.

Tom Sexton

Executive Director



Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited

Vision and Mission

Mission St Thomas More School is a child-safe school that offers an educational foundation, which is united in faith and committed to developing the whole person to live, learn and thrive in God's love.

Vision

As a community of learners, we will strive to:

- Achieve excellence in education in a Catholic faith community. 
- Nurture the spirit, mind and body of each learner. 
- Provide a stimulating and collaborative learning environment preparing all for lifelong learning.
- Empower learners to meet the future with confidence and resilience.

Philosophy

St Thomas More School makes connections for and with the students through the curriculum, learning experiences, feedback, and teaching approaches so that students can develop as active and socially just citizens that integrate faith and life. Integral to improving student outcomes is learning and teaching, curriculum, assessment and reporting.

Our teaching and learning philosophy is based on the belief that all students can achieve success given sufficient time and support. We believe that a focus on collaboration, learning and results are crucial in supporting students to achieve success in all facets of their school life. By offering a rich curriculum, we nurture an enthusiasm for learning in our students and a belief that optimal achievements are possible.

School Overview

St Thomas More School is a Foundation to Year 6 co-educational Catholic school in the St Patrick's Cathedral Parish of the Diocese of Ballarat. Our school is located in Alfredton, a suburb in the west of Ballarat, which is located in a high-growth area of Ballarat West. Our school draws students from the local area as well as from the surrounding rural areas. There was an enrolment of 427 students in 2022.

St Thomas More School draws on the Gospel values to build a learning environment where students feel valued and inspired to learn. We offer a quality-learning environment where each individual is supported to reach his or her potential.

We promote a vibrant, caring community that works together to create a welcoming and stimulating educational environment. Our teaching and learning philosophy is based on the belief that all students can achieve success given sufficient time and support. We believe that a focus on collaboration, learning and results are crucial in supporting students to achieve success in all facets of their school life. By offering a rich curriculum, we nurture an enthusiasm for learning in our students and a belief that optimal achievements are possible.

In 2022, the school staff continued to implement the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) model that is based on 'an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve'. (Dufour et al).

We believe that nurturing children through the critical, formative years means surrounding them with a learning environment rich in experience and opportunity and a pastoral atmosphere of individual care and attention.

Principal's Report

It is with pleasure that I present the 2022 Annual Report to the School Community for St Thomas More Catholic Primary School. I am very proud of the spiritual, academic, social and sporting achievements of our students throughout the year.

St. Thomas More Catholic Primary School continues to be well respected and has continued to strongly serve our local community. We are very proud of the sense of community that continues to develop. We genuinely value the input from the parish, our families, the Parents and Friends association, School Advisory Council, DOBCEL and other external support networks.

I have again been blessed to lead this wonderful school community. Throughout this year the school truly enlivened the school motto "With God First, We will Live, Learn and Thrive".

Catholic Identity and Mission

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Creating and nurturing a Christ-centred learning community that recognises, recontextualises and responds to the Catholic tradition and experiences/needs of all.

- Provide regular opportunity for rich dialogue and develop understanding with and of other faith traditions through professional learning teams and team planning.
- Make use of and implement the CEB Awakenings Scope and Sequence.
- Utilise commentaries to support Scripture teaching.
- Use effective pedagogy to enable students to develop symbolic meaning of Scripture.
- Create a school song and/or prayer that reflects St Thomas More's Mission and Vision in student friendly language.
- Create and participate in frequent prayerful experiences that preserve Catholic traditions and enable individual expression.

Achievements

This year saw the implementation of the CEO released Scope and Sequence for the teaching of scripture and unit planning. This is a two year cycle of units in all grade levels except for Foundation. This has been welcomed by all teaching staff, but particularly those who may be lacking some confidence in their ability to teach Religious education. Units of work are prepared by Ballarat REL and CEB staff each term following the Shared Christian Praxis model. These extensive units include numerous resources and a power point providing information on the focus scriptural text.

These units of work were presented to teams by the REL and after dialogue and collaboration they were adapted for our needs at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School to be focused on each term. Each team works on four units over the course of the year. The new Scope and Sequence ensures that students are focusing on different scriptural texts over the course of their schooling. CEB REL officer, Jo-anne Van der Voort spent one planning session with each team unpacking these units.

The staff spent time during the first term understanding the approach to studying scripture known as the 'Three Worlds of the Text'. This is an approach to studying and understanding scripture that recognises scripture as more than simply words on a page. Examining the world BEHIND the text provides students with the context about the culture and history of the time of the scriptural text. The world OF the text provides students with the context about the genre of the writing within the text and the world IN FRONT OF the text provides context about interpretation over time and use of the text within religious communities in today's world. This new learning by staff was further supported by Jo-anne Van der Voort attending a termly staff

meeting. Again staff were very engaged and enthusiastic in this study of scripture and increased their knowledge, understanding and interpretation of scriptural passages from the Old Testament and New Testament, with a focus on the Infancy Narratives in term four in preparation for Christmas.

Fr Justin Driscoll facilitated a professional development day held in Daylesford. This day was a personal reflection day on the theme of 'authentic leadership'.

It is a requirement that all staff accrue a minimum of fifty hours of Religious Education professional development over a five year period in order for them to receive their accreditation to teach Religious education. This work with Jo-anne and Fr Justin has ensured staff are continuing to increase these required hours.

The REL attended a new REL two day conference, two online network meetings, one in person professional development day and one Diocesan Religious Education Conference to further enhance knowledge of the logistics of the role and focus on scriptural interpretation which was again invaluable in working with and supporting school teams to implement their units of work.

Whole School Prayer, led by one class per fortnight returned this year to being held in person in the hall. This is an important aspect of our school culture ensuring prayerful experiences continue to support the Catholic tradition. Classes focused on different aspects of the liturgical calendar, various cultural days or themes from their current unit of work. Staff continue to ensure that this prayer time is a reverent and respectful time for our students and staff. Parents were also invited back to share as a community. Whole School Prayer will return to being weekly celebrations in 2023. Each week also begins with prayer at our whole school online assembly led by Simon Duffy and the student leadership team. The students also had the opportunity to celebrate mass three times at school at our Beginning of Year mass, St Thomas More Feast Day and the Feast of Mary Mackillop. All students were encouraged to attend our final term Mass of Thanksgiving and Grade Six Graduation at St Patrick's Cathedral. Staff shared prayer at each weekly staff meeting taking turns to lead this quiet reflection time.

We welcomed Fr Ed Moloney as our new parish priest and school chaplain. As well as celebrating masses Fr Ed has visited the school for various school events such as our Mother's and Father's day breakfasts, Mission day celebrations and school camp at Cave Hill Creek. This has given the students the opportunity to interact and get to know Fr Ed.

Many special events throughout the year enabled students to recontextualise their scriptural understanding through various actions. Term One include our now annual 'K's for Caritas' event and Crazy Sock day, both raising important funds for Caritas. Catholic Education Week

celebrations took place in May with the theme 'Share the Good News'. Following two years of lock down we took the opportunity to open the school for parents and friends to share lunch with their children, tour the school, participate in classroom activities and celebrate a liturgy together. It was a special day to again see the school crowded with visitors. A particular highlight was at our St Thomas More Feast Day mass where Mrs Sue Larkin's class unveiled a mosaic of our Live, Learn and Thrive motto. This amazing artwork was the idea of and coordinated by Sue and is now proudly on display in the undercover area. Mission Day took place in October and our grade five and six students enjoyed coordinating this event for all students with funds raised being donated to Catholic Mission.

The St Patrick's Cathedral sacramental program was supported by the parish schools through parish meetings and teachers leading mass dismissals. Students received the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation over the course of the year. There were high numbers in each of these programs as the effects of the COVID lockdown impacted.

VALUE ADDED

Continue commitment to the interpretation of scripture through dialogue amongst teams provided an additional depth which ensured that the post-critical belief dimension was being prioritised.

Staff continued to be led by the REL and CEB staff to develop appropriate RE units of work that were inclusive of all, following the Shared Christian Praxis and provide students with opportunities to discern and dialogue with scripture as a basis of the unit.

The Scripture Scope and Sequence and unit plan were presented to staff as a basis to begin the 2022 year.

Learning and Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

We will build staff capability to be leaders of learning so that we develop a culture of continuous professional improvement.

We will engage students in their learning so that they become independent and interdependent learners.

Ensuring highly effective, evidence-based teaching strategies, engage and empower learners and give life to all aspects of the whole person.

Achievements

The Professional Learning Community (PLC) at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, informed and supported by the pedagogical framework, *The New Art and Science of Teaching* (2017), by Robert J Marzano, continues to grow. Our pedagogical approaches, consistent with the Professional Learning Community (PLC) ideals, drive learning and teaching at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School. Learning conversations and decisions continue to be based on the guiding PLC questions, keeping our focus firmly on learning for students and staff.

Six Critical Questions

- What do you want the students to learn?
- How do we know if they've learned it?
- What do we do if they don't know it?
- What do we do if they already know it?
- How will we increase our instructional competence?
- How will we coordinate our efforts at school?

One of our key priorities for 2022 as articulated in our Annual Action Plan was:

“Ensuring highly effective, evidence-based teaching strategies, engage and empower learners and give life to all aspects of the whole person.”

Our focus within Learning and Teaching, was to engage in professional learning to build a common understanding around learner agency and student voice. In this way we believed we would deepen our understanding of ways to effectively engage and empower learners at STMCP. A project was offered through a collegial partnership between Catholic Education Ballarat and Dr Jayne-Louise Collins (Ed Partnerships). A core team at our school was established to engage in the series of professional learning workshops which subsequently inspired, scaffolded, and resourced the professional learning within our school context, led by the core team. Our goal to build a common understanding, through professional learning, about

learner agency and student voice was in effect, taken up by all teams as a shared goal. In this way we achieved the goal we had set for ourselves in 2022. Further than developing a common understanding, small actions were taken up in teams resulting from ongoing conversations and professional reading and viewing. This included inviting students to partake in pre planning discussions for units of work, seeking input and involvement from the Yr 6 Student Leadership group in various ways and creating more opportunities for learning conversations/conferences, including goal setting, within the classroom. A highlight this year was being able to prepare for and run Student Involved Learning Conversations (SILCs) in Term 3. With a scaffold in place, and plenty of practise opportunities, the students led a conversation about their own learning and achievements. This was well received by parents and a proud moment for the students. It was apparent that many of our students could articulate learning goals, and were keen to move onto and achieve the next steps in their learning.

Seesaw has continued to be an effective platform to communicate student achievement regularly F-6. Parents are kept regularly informed of focus areas across the curriculum matched with photos, videos and samples of student work, as well as special days/events.

Consistent with PLC practices, teachers meet in collaborative teams to discuss assessment data and establish goals for learning. All learning is clearly aligned with the Victorian Curriculum, and communicated to students in the form of 'I can...' learning statements. Teachers are working together to source and make use of increasingly more effective strategies to support the learning of students.

Assessment for and of learning occurs in a timely manner, guided by a whole school assessment schedule. School wide data collection of key literacy and numeracy data provides not only a level of accountability for all concerned, but a means to consider the impact of teaching. In this way we have been able to identify where practices need to be developed and improved.

We set and monitored whole school SMART goals in reading using the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessments (3-6) and Alpha Assess (F-2). All students were part of a whole school data wall that continues to be monitored and kept up to date. Further to this we have used PAT Assessment tools online to inform, set and track whole school SMART goals in the areas of Spelling, Reading and Numeracy. The use of this standardised assessment continues to provide valuable trend data, and provides another perspective along with the other school assessments in use.

For the first time Yr 3 and Yr 5 students at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School completed NAPLAN assessments online. Yr 3 students were able to complete their writing assessments on paper, but this was the only task in hard copy format.

Further changes were made to the format of student semester reports as a result of teacher feedback, and in doing so, we have achieved a streamlined and concise product. As of 2022, English as an Additional Language (EAL) has been added to our reports (for those students meeting the criteria), starting with Foundation students only. We will continue to ensure that we regularly review the information in and the format of our student reports to meet the needs of the school community.

An ongoing, and important focus has been to strengthen the collaborative practices within and between teams of teachers. This year we established a Team Coaching structure. Working in conjunction with Marg McDonald (CEB), two coaches have led a PLC Leadership Team consisting of Team Leaders and other members of the Leadership Team. We focused on developing more deeply some of the skills and capabilities that would promote higher levels of collaboration through listening and inquiring. The PLC Leadership Team met each fortnight.

With the guiding principle and commitment, "I commit to doing whatever it takes to achieve growth for all", we maintained structures to support differentiated learning F-6. This included the school wide practice of targeted intervention to support students in areas of need. We were able to provide some 'boost' sessions for students in literacy and numeracy. This included a focus on lifting student levels as well as extending students. We have a number of intervention programs to support student learning at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School. Reading Recovery for Year 1 students continued throughout 2022. This enabled us to get maximum coverage for those students with the greatest need. Other intervention programs that were in place in 2022 were: ERIK, MiniLit, MultiLit and MacqLit. We have also had JEMMS in place, which is a program designed to build automaticity and number sense in Mathematics.

We maintained the approach of having integrated Inquiry as a means of ensuring curriculum delivery across areas such as The Arts, Technologies, the Humanities, Health and Science. This continues to be an area of learning attracting high levels of interest and engagement from our students.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

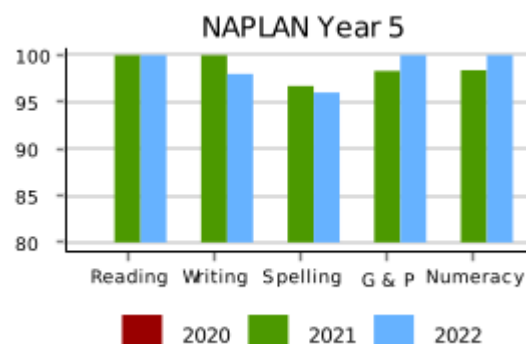
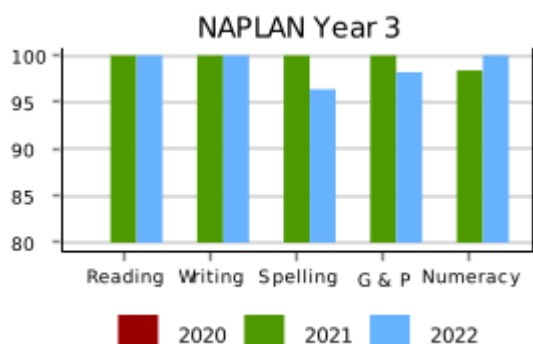
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PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2020	2021	2020 – 2021 Changes	2022	2021 – 2022 Changes
	%			%	
	*		*		
YR 03 Grammar & Punctuation	-	100.0	-	98.2	-1.8
YR 03 Numeracy	-	98.4	-	100.0	1.6
YR 03 Reading	-	100.0	-	100.0	0.0
YR 03 Spelling	-	100.0	-	96.4	-3.6
YR 03 Writing	-	100.0	-	100.0	0.0
YR 05 Grammar & Punctuation	-	98.3	-	100.0	1.7
YR 05 Numeracy	-	98.4	-	100.0	1.6
YR 05 Reading	-	100.0	-	100.0	0.0
YR 05 Spelling	-	96.7	-	96.0	-0.7
YR 05 Writing	-	100.0	-	98.0	-2.0

* There are no NAPLAN results to report in 2020 as the Australian Government decided that due to the COVID-19 pandemic NAPLAN Assessments would not take place.

** Data cannot be reported for this year as the number of students that sat the test was below 5 and the data has been suppressed for privacy reasons in accordance with the ACARA NAPLAN data reporting provisions.

*** No students sat the NAPLAN tests in this year level and in one or both of the relevant years.



Student Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- To maintain and increase a high level of student engagement.
- To continue to develop the social and emotional curriculum using the 'Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships' program.
- To implement the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) framework through the use of the behaviour matrix and lesson plans.

Ensuring highly effective, evidence-based teaching strategies, engage and empower learners and give life to all aspects of the whole person.

Achievements

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School continues to place emphasis on the social and emotional wellbeing of both our staff and students. The 2022 school year began with 'Fantastic 48'. This is an opportunity for classrooms to have the first two days of the term to specifically focus on understanding each other, developing a shared classroom understanding of expectations and setting personal goals to work to achieve throughout the school year. An importance is placed on creating a classroom where students can be supported to take on challenges and celebrate the success of each other using positive language. Fantastic 48 is also a time to unpack the School Wide Positive Behaviour Framework and our 'Live, Learn and Thrive' motto.

Each classroom at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School engages in the social-emotional wellbeing program: Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships (RRRR). This classroom based program is taught across the four terms as structured classroom teaching and learning sessions. The Respectful Relationships program is aligned with the Victorian Curriculum's strand of Personal and Social Capabilities and provides opportunities for students to develop their understanding of emotional literacy and discuss how to develop positive relationships with others.

In 2022, we as a school are implementing the Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited supported program of Reframing Learning and Teaching Environments (ReLATE). The framework has been developed by The MacKillop Institute and this initiative focuses on making lasting and measurable changes to better the teaching, learning and wellbeing within our school community. ReLATE centred staff professional development opportunities supported our staff to understand how adverse childhood experiences can have lasting effects on one's engagement, health, learning and wellbeing. In addition to this, it also has assisted us to continue to work towards a sustainable and positive cultural change within our school. The ReLATE model has provided an opportunity for our staff to create a School Implementation Team (SIT). The SIT meets fortnightly to discuss the short, medium and long term goals of our school which have

been identified and developed through two baseline surveys: Attitudes to Trauma Informed Care (ARTIC scale) and Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL). These goals attend to ReLATE's 4 Foundational concepts which are:

1. Safety: ReLATE recognises safety as an essential precondition for quality teaching and learning.
2. A counter-stress school environment: ReLATE fosters wellbeing by actively counteracting stress, through congruent, trauma-informed policies and practices that empower communication and promote self-regulation
3. Enhanced teaching and learning: ReLATE is guided by neuroscience to enhance teaching and learning and encourage staff to use repeated, supportive actions
4. Sustainable whole school culture change: ReLATE is guided by trauma-informed research and evidence that integrates our understanding of organisational culture change, resilience, adversity, mindset, and collective efficacy.

ReLATE will continue to be an ongoing focus for our school with the development of staff and classroom 'Community/ReLATE Circles'. According to The MacKillop Institute, 'The Circle has various objectives, including safety, emotional literacy, social responsibility and a sense of collective purpose and seeks to build relational trust, equality, attunement and shared enjoyment, in which to be courageous is to be vulnerable.' (MacKillop Institute, 2022). We will continue our ReLATE journey into 2023.

The Peaceful Kids program continues to be a social-emotional intervention within our school. This small group program aims to lessen the anxiety and stress some of our students may present with while at school. It provides opportunities to build resilience strategies which allow them to be better equipped to deal with everyday challenges with a positive mindset. The Peaceful Kids program is offered to our students in Year 3-6 and participants are guided throughout an 8 week program led by a qualified facilitator.

On a weekly basis, the Wellbeing Team meets to discuss concerns or needs of our community. This team consists of the Principal, Deputy Principal, School Counsellor, Learning Diversity Leader and Wellbeing Leader. Throughout these meetings, the Student Behaviour Surveys were developed and analysed. These surveys were completed by our Year 3-6 students in Term One and Term 4. The results of these surveys were collated and shared with our students so that there was an opportunity to discuss ways that we can continue to improve student wellbeing within all areas of our school. From these surveys, the Wellbeing Team saw a need to provide students with an alternative communication method and the student wellbeing email was developed.

VALUE ADDED

- DOBCEL support staff were utilised to further investigate social emotional programs that may support student wellbeing

- Foundation 2023 transitions and parent information sessions to support student to transition into the school environment successfully
- Rights, Resilience and Respectful Relationship program taught once a week
- Quiet Play options during second break on Tuesdays and Fridays for students to monitor personal self-regulative needs
- Opportunities for the P-6 buddies to interact and develop mentoring relationships
- Anti-bullying Code of Conduct agreed to and followed by students, staff and parents
- Restorative Practices Model used by staff in the classroom and on the yard
- Students monitored within the yard space
- Parent, student and teacher communication methods including SSG and Student-Led Conferences to encourage a shared approach to student learning and wellbeing
- Utilised behavioural think sheets to encourage students to think about others and make better choices when incidents occurred
- Behavioural contracts and Safety Plans written and developed for individuals when required
- On-going implementation of the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support framework.
- Provided weekly Wrap Around the Learner (WATL) meetings to plan and intervene for identified students, led by our Learning Diversity Leaders
- Utilised Learning Support Officers to assist in classrooms and deliver small group and one-on-one intervention programs
- ReLATE Professional Development Foundation Day 1 and 2 for staff to develop an understanding of trauma informed care and sustainable cultural change
- Development of SIT to implement ReLATE goals.

STUDENT SATISFACTION

The latest Insight SRC data showed Student satisfaction improvement in the following areas:

Purposeful teaching

Teacher Empathy

Student Safety

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Attendance-related notifications from parents are recorded by school administration staff who in turn notify class teachers. Attendance registers are monitored in the front office daily and parents were contacted in the event of unexplained or regular student absence.

Due to our high attendance rate (88%) the above policy and practice is adequate.

When students were learning remotely their attendance was recorded through their attendance at online class meetings and through daily work submissions.

The Principal contacts families where non -attendance is significant and when students are absent on a regular basis.

AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL	
Y01	88.8%
Y02	88.5%
Y03	91.0%
Y04	89.0%
Y05	89.4%
Y06	89.0%
Overall average attendance	89.3%

Child Safe Standards

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of students at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School.

To empower families, students and staff to have a voice and raise concerns.

To implement rigorous risk management, employment practices, as well as staff review processes and practices.

Achievements

- Provided professional development for all staff to understand their professional responsibility towards enacting the Ministerial Act 870 (up until 30th June 2022 and the new Ministerial Act 1359 (effective from 1st July 2022) regarding Child Safe Standards. The new Standards provide greater clarity for organisations on actions required to meet minimum standards. As a school we have over five years' experience of mandatory Child Safe Standards, so have already established well-developed child safety frameworks.

Although similar to Victoria's current Child Safe Standards, staff were made aware of the key changes included in the new requirements:

- To involve families and communities in organisations' efforts to keep children and young people safe
 - For a greater focus on safety for Aboriginal children and young people
 - To manage the risk of child abuse in online environments
 - In relation to governance, systems and processes to keep children and young people safe.
- DOBCEL provided guidance and training for the Child Protection Officer (CPO) in addition to policies, protocols, processes to ensure compliance with the seven/eleven standards and the cultivation of a child safe culture.
 - All staff members completed the online Mandatory Reporting module that outlines the legal requirements for certain professionals to report a reasonable belief relating to child physical or sexual abuse to child protection authorities.
 - Ensuring that all staff, CRTs, volunteers and contractors are aware and responsible for upholding of the School's Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct. Records of signed Codes of Conduct were stored digitally. Ensured that all school staff signed off on the Child Safety Code of Conduct annually and were bound by this Code of Conduct.
 - Ensured that all volunteers, contractors, clergy, School Advisory Council members and all visitors had signed off on the Child Safety Code of Conduct and were bound by this code of conduct.
 - Ensured that all volunteers had completed the Child Safety Induction requirements and had supplied the school with a current Working with Children Check and photo ID.

- Maintained registries to reflect up-to-date compliance of staff, volunteers and contractors in regard to Child Safe requirements.
- The school continued to implement the Child Safety Policy and Standards.
- Staff were provided with annual professional development around the Reportable Conduct Scheme including what it is, staff requirements and responding to a report.
- Circulated, adopted and implemented the Reportable Conduct policy and processes with all staff.
- When the situations arose, staff followed policies and procedures when making reports relating to protecting the safety and wellbeing of children.
- Child Safety was an ongoing agenda item at all weekly staff meetings and termly School Advisory Council (SAC) meetings.
- The Child Protection Officer (CPO) position was maintained. This included receiving training in Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS), Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) and Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM).
- Introduced the Re-imagining the Learning and Teaching Environment (ReLATE) program for all staff. For 2022 this included two school closure days of professional development. Established a school-based SIT team, consisting of a representation of teaching staff, Learning Support Officers and administration staff to be the core team to oversee and drive the ReLATE goals that the school had identified.
- The CPO attended and participated in Diocesan Schools Child Safety Network meetings conducted online. Information gained through these meetings was passed on to staff at staff meetings and through emails. The Network meetings were recorded and circulated to schools for future reference or use with staff.
- Ensured that staff selection, supervision and management practices met with the requirements of the Ministerial Order for Standard Four MO 870) and Standard Six (MO 1359).
- All staff received updates on their roles and responsibilities in responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse.
- Informed the school community regarding our policies, practices and compliance requirements. These were made available on the school website.
- Offered student wellbeing programs such as RRRR, PaTHS, Bounce Back, Restorative Practices, Circle Time.
- Continued to have a school pastoral care worker (2.5 days per week) available to support the wellbeing and safety of students and their families.
- Ensured our Behaviour Policy was an active document and that the students and the community were well-informed about this policy.
- Continued implementation of the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) model. To maintain its importance an element of the framework was selected as a focus for the school's weekly online assembly presented by the principal.
- Created and delivered lessons that explicitly outlined the expectations of student's behaviour associated with all aspects of school life.

- An outline of the Rights, Roles and Responsibilities of each of the staff positions were reviewed and made available to all staff.

Leadership

Goals & Intended Outcomes

We will build staff capability to be leaders of learning so that we develop a culture of continuous professional development.

Achievements

There were many major leadership and stewardship areas addressed over the school year.

- A comprehensive School Master Plan was created with the engagement of Law Architects. The process involved input from staff, students and parents. The school will now apply for capital grants in 2023 with the intention to commence the project works in 2024.
- Major works were undertaken on the school oval to address issues with the surface. The company TurfCare and Hire undertook the work that was overseen by ETP Turf consultants.
- We commenced our school 5-year strategic plan (2022-2026), with involvement from the whole school community.
- We continued to work with St Patrick's Parish Primary and Siena Catholic Primary Schools to build better links between the schools, allowing for more sharing and understanding.
- The continued emphasis on the use of a Shared Leadership model within the school.
- Offering staff the opportunity to develop and 'thrive' by undertaking leadership roles and responsibilities.
- The school utilised Catholic Education Office staff expertise where/when required as well as out-sourcing other professionals in various fields when required.
- Large investment in information technology to allow for staff and students to have increased computer and technology connectivity.
- Continue to allocate resources (physical, human and financial) to school initiative.

With the assistance of the Parents and Friends we have been able to create a new environmental garden.

EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Description of Professional Learning undertaken in 2022

- NCEC Conference (Melbourne) - 2 staff
- ACHPER conference - 1 staff
- Learner Agency Professional Development - 4 staff (4 days)
- ReLATE training modules 1- 8 (all staff 2 days)
- Religious Education Professional development (all staff)
- Religious Education Diocesan Conference - 1 staff
- Child safety- Mandatory reporting (all staff)
- Student health - Diabetes in School Level 2 (all staff)
- National Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) - Disability Standards for Education for Primary school - Part 1 and 2 (All teachers)
- Online Work Health and Safety Compliance Training (all staff)
- First Aid, anaphylaxis, diabetes training (all staff)
- Religious Education - Exploring Enhancing Catholic School Identity
- Music “Feel the Beat” (Melbourne) - 1 staff

Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2022	49
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$356

TEACHER SATISFACTION

The latest Insight SRC data showed Staff Climate improvement in the following areas:

- Student behaviour
- Respect for students
- Teacher confidence
- Professional growth
- Work demands
- Pastoral Care
- Appraisal and Recognition

Individual Morale, School Morale, Respect for students, Student Management remained at very positive levels.

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE

Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	92.5%
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ALL STAFF RETENTION RATE

Staff Retention Rate	90.2%
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TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	6.9%
Graduate	10.3%
Graduate Certificate	0.0%
Bachelor Degree	79.3%
Advanced Diploma	31.0%
No Qualifications Listed	6.9%

STAFF COMPOSITION

Principal Class (Headcount)	2.0
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	33.0
Teaching Staff (FTE)	26.4
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	23.0
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	21.4
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0.0

Community Engagement

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Embedding a culture of inclusivity that celebrates diversity and partners with the community to provide relevant and authentic learning opportunities for all.

- To enhance the school community connectedness.
- To improve student engagement through school community engagement.
- To strengthen the parent/school/parish partnership

Achievements

As a result of the significant reduction in COVID-19 restrictions the school was able to gradually welcome parents and families back onto the school grounds and this promoted increased opportunities to forge stronger connection and partnership with the school community. Many and various strategies and actions were utilised throughout 2022 to enhance the school community connectedness and promote/strengthen parent, school/ parish community partnerships.

Being able to invite parents, other family members and friends into our school space once again opened up many opportunities to re-connect with existing families and make connections with new families to the school. Having learnt much about the importance of relationship building through the previous years of intermittent remote learning and harsh restrictions, we continued to be conscious of maintaining effective methods and strategies of communicating and connecting with members of, and beyond, our school community.

These included:

- A comprehensive fortnightly newsletter that informed the parent community on all aspects of the school. This always featured a combination of information and photographs. In addition, it also contained a section related to Community Notices and Events where community groups, clubs and organisations could promote their endeavours.
- The St Thomas More Catholic Primary School app. was frequently used to instantaneously communicate information with parents.
- A St Thomas More Catholic Primary School Facebook page was updated frequently to reflect the activities, events and achievements involving students, staff, families and the parish in a very timely manner. Many likes and comments from the school community were regularly recorded.
- Parent Access Module (PAM) remained the primary method of acquiring and checking parental consent in response to digital notifications.

- Teacher's continued to communicate samples of student learning through the use of the digital platform of Seesaw. Videos, photos, text, images, files or drawings are all examples of samples that had been shared. Through the parent's responses it was clearly evident that they appreciated this form of communication.

- At the start of each term, each of the four teams of teachers created a newsletter to be sent home to families that outlined particular events and foci for the forthcoming term.

- On a daily basis the student diaries were used as a means for communicating messages between teacher and parents.

- Throughout the year teachers kept in touch with student's parents as the need arose by utilising a variety of contact methods: phone calls, emails, google meets in addition to onsite meetings, whether they were scheduled or impromptu. Where required or requested contact was made more frequently with individual families

- The School Advisory Council (SAC) met termly and was a culturally diverse representation of the school community. They were regularly consulted on operational and strategic aspects of the school and their voice and agency was considered reflective of the school community.

In Term 1 the school offered parents the opportunity to attend a variety of information sessions that focused on:

- Strategies for settling students into school.

- How students learn to read, the approaches and strategies used at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School and tips on how parents are able to support their child to become a competent reader.

- In place of the traditional annual Information Evening where teachers outlined the expectations, routines, proposed curriculum and events that they expected the students would be involved in throughout the term, a newsletter was created by each of the teams of teachers. This was then shared with families in both hardcopy and digital form. The decision to convey the information in this manner was prompted by the COVID restrictions that were in place early in the school year.

- Participation in the Classroom Helpers program aimed at up-skilling parents/ grandparents and family friends who wanted to assist in the junior classrooms during the Literacy block (9-11am).

- Parent Support Group meetings and mini-courses led by the school's pastoral care worker.

EXPECTATIONS, OPPORTUNITIES & EVENTS OFFERED:

All parents/volunteers/contractors were required to comply with Child-Safe standards which meant that all staff/volunteers/contractors at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School were

required to annually complete the Child Safe Induction process prior to assisting in classrooms, on excursions or participating in group work on committees. Once the induction was completed and a Working with Children Check and photo ID had been provided and recorded by administration staff, they were then permitted to assist with school events.

Prior to Parent Teacher interviews occurring in early February, parents were invited to complete a short questionnaire with their child/ren relating to assisting the teacher know more about each individual student. This proforma formed the basis for discussion at the PT Interviews and assisted with student goal setting.

The school welcomed the community to attend the Opening School Mass, Assemblies and weekly Whole School Prayers offering any parents/families the opportunity for the first time in more than a year.

Our Assemblies, Whole School Prayers and meetings (Staff & SAC) begin with Acknowledgement of Country. We have developed a child-friendly version, including actions, which is understood and well known by the students.

Our Parents and Friends committee remained enthusiastic and active in organising and hosting, both social and fundraising events, throughout the year. In general, these events were very well supported and attended, e.g. Mother's Day Breakfast, Father's Day Breakfast, Carols on the Court, although, contrastingly and unfortunately, there were some planned events (e.g. Trivia Night) that were cancelled due to low ticket sales.

We conducted four 2023 Parent Information sessions to provide families of prospective enrolments with an opportunity to learn about our school, the school's structure, curriculum areas offered, our teaching approach etc. Attendees were given a guided tour of the school conducted by members of our Student Leadership group. Families had until Friday May 27th to submit their school preferences for 2023 Foundation, after which principals met to allocate positions (with the priority being to accommodate as many first preferences as possible).

Throughout the year our students experienced a number of off-site learning opportunities, often utilising the local area including the Lake Wendouree and wetlands precinct, Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, Hepburn Springs area, the Alfredton neighbourhood to name a few of nearby the excursions. In addition, our middle and senior students participated in annual camps; the Year 3/4 camp was held at Lady Northcote Camp near Bacchus Marsh and the Year 5/6 camp took place at Cave Hill Creek.

Senior Constable Des Hudson conducted the Police in Schools program with our Year 5/6 classes; this consisted of many visits and sessions throughout the year. He also conducted Cyber-safe sessions with all Year 3-6 classes.

During Catholic Education Week in May we extended an open invitation to families and friends to visit and tour the school.

Our partnership with QuickCliq to provide families with an online canteen option for their child/ren's lunches on Thursdays and Fridays continued throughout 2022. Families indicated that they were appreciative of the large menu choices available which catered for a wide range

of food preferences and dietary needs. Orders were taken up until 8am of the morning the order was required and were generally very accurately supplied. A small percentage from each canteen item sold contributed towards P&F fundraising.

Student progress and achievement was conveyed to parents at the end of each semester through a formal written report. Following receiving the written reports, parents were offered the opportunity to discuss student progress with their child's classroom teacher if desired.

The second semester Parent Teacher interviews took on the new format of 'Student Involved Learning Conferences' (SILC) involving the teacher, parents and student. The SILCs were conducted in place of the traditional parent-teacher interviews, and involved the child having a significant role to play in talking about their own learning. This included them speaking about some of the learning goals they had had, the progress they had made, they showed some of their work, and invited feedback

The school website was regularly reviewed and, through the support of our school compliance officer, remained current and up-to-date for purposes of enrolment enquiries and Child Safety requirements.

We held short face-to-face 'interviews' with each of our new Foundation students (for the forthcoming year) and their parents. These 63 meetings were conducted onsite and supported us in putting names to faces and gathering information crucial for supporting a smooth transition to formal schooling. It offered parents the opportunity to share information that was considered helpful in understanding and supporting their child as a student at the school. Each meeting concluded with a visit to a current Foundation classroom to give the child and parents a glimpse of what happens in the classroom. For the majority of the new Foundation students it was their first time inside the school so their curiosity was evident.

We continued our connection with Australian Catholic University (ACU) and in 2022 extended this connection to Federation University whereby we benefited from the services of two 1st year and two 4th year pre-service teachers working as part-time Learning Support Officers (LSOs), bringing a total of five pre-service teachers being on staff as LSOs. Each of these university pre-service Bachelor of Teaching students successfully managed to combine their full-time studies with their STMCPs work commitments. Having pre-service teachers work as LSOs was very beneficial as it gave practical experience of applying the theory learnt at university in a classroom context, and additionally they had the opportunity to observe and gain strategies from experienced, effective teachers. In September we were fortunate to transition one of the 4th year pre-service students from being a LSO to become a full-time teacher, replacing a staff member who commenced maternity leave. This was possible as she had completed all her university studies and requirements and had been granted 'permission to teach' from the Victorian Institute of Teaching. Throughout 2022 we continued to host and mentor pre-service students of various year levels from the Australian Catholic University.

During 2022 a working party was created to investigate and propose a new school uniform that would consist of multiple options for academic and sporting attire. Input and feedback opportunities were integral to the process with students, families, staff and suppliers in frequent consultation. A new colour scheme was selected and following feedback items were shortlisted and eventually finalised. Once chosen the uniform pieces were displayed and conveyed through the newsletter. Overall, the new uniform that will be introduced throughout 2023 & 2024, has been received very positively within the community and, with a completely new colourway chosen, it will project a new and refreshed identity for the school. Being conscious of not

wanting to be wasteful in regards to discontinuing the current uniform, it was decided that the school would fund the freight costs involved with getting uniform donations recycled and repurposed.

We partnered with some local sporting clubs to provide specialised sports coaching for various year levels. Through securing Sporting Schools funding for Terms 1, 2 & 3 we were able to utilise Ballarat Gymsports for our Year 1/2 classes to participate in gymnastic coaching sessions, and all our Year 3/4 and Year 1/2 classes each benefitted from weekly specialised basketball coaching provided by Basketball Ballarat coaches.

As COVID restrictions were lifted we were once again able to access and utilise a number of external allied health providers (e.g. speech pathologists, occupational therapists, psychologists etc) who had previously been limited in their ability to offer onsite support and assessment of individual students. This also included a stronger working partnership with staff from Catholic Education Ballarat (CEB) as they were able to re-establish school visits. These established partnerships address identified student needs and offer access, experiences and support resources not available within the school, including partnerships with the parish, other education and training institutions, local businesses and community organisations.

Each morning two staff members from the school's Leadership Team would supervise student arrival. They were positioned at each entry gate and would welcome each student and provided hand sanitizer as students entered the school grounds. This supervision occurred daily from 8:30-8:55am.

Towards the end of Term 4 our 2023 Foundation students were involved with two onsite transition sessions to gain experience of what it will be like to be an STMCPs student. They became familiar with their new setting, new teacher and peers. During one of the sessions a Parent Information session was also conducted and very well attended by parents, both new and existing. The session included information provided by the principal, deputy, curriculum leaders, learning diversity leaders, our P&F members, Year 6 student leaders, Foundation students and a parent representative.

Similarly, our departing Year Six students had the opportunity to experience time at their future secondary schools, and where needed and in collaboration with specific families and secondary schools, some students were able to attend more than one session in order to support a smooth transition to their new learning setting in 2023.

The school has continued to support after school activities and options for our students and families. This included Kelly Sports utilising our facilities for sports two afternoons a week as well as a daily 'walking bus' to escort students safely to After School Care, conducted by Ballarat YMCA, at Alfredton Primary School.

Towards the conclusion of Term 4 a 'Thank You Afternoon Tea' was held to acknowledge and thank classroom helpers who had volunteered and dedicated time to supporting the learning within our junior classes throughout 2022.

Our Yr. 5 students had the opportunity to visit St Patrick's College, Loreto College and Damascus College as part of their Secondary Education Experience Days (SEED). These sessions, each of approximately four hours in duration, gave our students a first-hand glimpse of what secondary school settings are like as well as allowed them opportunities to experience a variety of subjects not regularly offered at primary school level. It is an annual event that helps consolidate our relationship with the local catholic secondary schools.

The senior year levels prepared, practised and performed a music concert which families and the community were invited to attend.

Again in 2022 staff were invited to donate personal care/ hygiene items to the St Vinnies Christmas appeal. St Vinnies requested items such as soap, toothpaste, tooth brushes, sanitary items, shampoo, brushes, combs, razors, shaving cream etc. These items were collected by St Vinnies prior to the end of the school year.

Also, as a school community, we encouraged students to think of others in our Ballarat community who are less fortunate than themselves and in need of assistance. With this in mind the Student Leadership Group organised a Christmas food appeal where food items were donated to St Vincent de Paul. Each family was encouraged to bring along non-perishable food items and leave them at the school office where they were passed on to St Vincent de Paul to distribute.

At the end of Term 4 our school community farewelled six staff members and wished them well as they either entered retirement, moved to new school new communities or explored new opportunities.

PARENT SATISFACTION

The most recent Insight SRC data shows growth in parent satisfaction in the following areas:

Parent Partnership

Approachability

School Improvement

Parent Input

Behaviour Management

Stimulating

Learning

Connectedness to School

Classroom behaviour